

*God's Peculiar Care in the Preservation
of our Religion and Liberties.*

A

SERMON

Preach'd at

Lancaster Assizes,

The 24th Day of March, 1716.

Before Judge *Dormer*, one of the
Justices of the King's Bench at
Westminster.

By *SAMUEL PEPLUE*, M. A.
And Vicar of *Preston* in *Lancashire.*

L O N D O N :

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God's Providence Care in the Preservation
of our Religion and Liberties.

SERMON



The Dedication
Your humble Servant for his Majesty's Service
the Wishes of your Country, has with
the Honour of your Highness's
That God would unite the Hearts
the Hands of all these Friends to our
Prayer the State of this
Government

To *Thomas Crispe, Esq;* High
Sheriff of the County Palatine
of *Lancaster.*

SIR,

I Have so lately publish'd a Discourse, on another Occasion*; That I was not willing to trouble the World with this, without saying, that it was at the Desire of the Judge, your Self, most of the Grand Jury, and other Gentlemen, that it appears abroad. It was your united Opinion, that it would be of some good Service to the Publick: For which Reason I was the more easily prevail'd with to publish it. My Design was to give the Auditory a very plain and summary Account of God's great Goodness, in the remarkable Preservation of our Religion and Liberties, from Time to Time, from those Men who of late, have made an open Attempt to bereave us of them.

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Your

* At Liverpoole, at the Trial of the Rebels, before Sir Thomas Bury, Kt. one of the Barons of his Majesty's Court of Exchequer, at Westminster; Sir Robert Eyres, Kt. one of the Justices of the King's Bench; and Sir James Montague, Kt. another of the Barons of his Majesty's Court of Exchequer, at Westminster.

The Dedication.

Your honest Zeal for his Majesty's Interest, and the Welfare of your Country, has been evident in all your Proceedings in that Post, with which he was pleas'd to Honour you.

That God would unite the Hearts, and strengthen the Hands of all sincere Friends to our gracious Prince, the Succession of his Family, and our happy Constitution in Church and State, is the hearty Desire of,

SIR,

Your very Humble

and Faithful Servant,

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1 SAMUEL XII. 7.

Now therefore stand still, that I may Reason with you before the Lord, of all the righteous Acts of the Lord, which he did to you, and to your Fathers.

IF we consider God's Proceedings with his Church under the Dispensation of the Old Testament, we shall find that he frequently put them in Mind of the many favourable Providences he had shew'd them; and made use of those Things as a powerful Argument to a constant Care of the Duties incumbent on them.

And this was a Method grounded on great Reason and Equity; especially considering, that God's Mercies were very great, and all that he expected in return for them, was no more than a sincere Obedience to his Holy Will.

Thus God introduc'd the Ten Commandments, by telling the *Israelites*, *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage*, *Exod. 20.*

Moses oft acquainted them with the loving Kindnesses of the Lord, and insisted on those Divine Favours, as so many unanswerable Demands of their Service and Fidelity. *Left their Heart should be lifted up, and they should forget the*

the Lord their God, he reminds them of their Egyptian Captivity, and rehearses God's leading them through that great and terrible Wilderness, wherein were fiery Serpents and Scorpions, and Drought; where there was no Water, who brought forth Water out of the Rock of Flint: Who fed them in the Wilderness with Manna which their Fathers knew not, Deut. 8. 14.

Now, from a Parity of Reason, and from the Motives and Arguments proper to enforce Religion, this way of Proceeding is as fit to be used with Christian Nations, as it was with the People of *Israel*.

Indeed, the Reason of Things makes the Argument stronger on our side, than it was on theirs; because where a Christian Nation has been favour'd with God's peculiar Providences, the Blessings must be greater on their part than on the other; inasmuch as the Privileges of Christianity are quite Superior to those vouchsaf'd the Children of *Israel*.

The Promises which God made to them were literally but of a Terrestrial Nature; and all the Deliverances he wrought for that People, were resolv'd into the Preservation of those earthly Blessings; but the Promises given to us Christians are expressly of a Spiritual Nature, and terminate in Heaven: And for this Reason, those distinguishing Acts of Divine Providence, by which the Holy Religion of Christ is continued to any Place, or Country, must be so much the more valuable, as they secure Blessings expressly of a superior Nature to such a People.

And

And it is what must be allow'd, that when to the great Blessings of Christianity, there may be truly added many other Enjoyments, little (if any way) inferior to the temporal Felicities of the Land of *Canaan* it self, it must carry the importance of God's good Providence still higher, and consequently bind our Duties more strongly upon us.

From what I have now observ'd, every Body that is duly affected with the inestimable Blessings of the Nation in which we live, and doth but consider by what remarkable Instances of Heaven's Care, they have been long preserv'd to us, cannot but be making the Application to all Degrees of Men among us, and admit that we should be put in mind of all the righteous Acts of the Lord which he has done to us, and to our Fathers.

By the righteous Acts of the Lord, are meant God's Benefits ; the *Hebrews* sometimes using to express Beneficence, or gracious Acts by Justice or Righteousness, because by such Actions a Person is declared to be justify'd or Righteous.

It was the Prophet's Design to bring to the People's Remembrance the great Mercies God had shew'd to their Fathers who were dead ; and to imprint upon their Minds a very lasting Sense of all those Favours they themselves had experienc'd from him : So that if either God's former, or latter Goodness cou'd reach their Hearts, he would not be wanting to lay it before them.

It may not be improper also to take Notice, that in the following Account of God's Mercies, some of those Calamities which befell the *Israelites*, are men-

mention'd ; but it is done with Brevity, and that for the Illustration of God's Mercy in their Deliverance.

These few hints still make this Scripture more apposite to our Case. Our Fathers had many remarkable Blessings bestow'd upon them, and we have been no less Partakers of God's loving Kindnesses. And both we and our Progenitors have felt some of God's Corrections: But so very gently have we been touch'd on that Account, that we may be said rather to have fear'd, than felt much of his Displeasure. Surely then, such a People as we of this Kingdom, may very well be reason'd with on the score of our past and present Circumstances ; *i. e.* it is fit we should be put in mind what God has done for us, and the Generations that are past: And it may not be improper, I presume, at this Time, to reflect on these Matters ; nor any unseasonable Enquiry what Use we have made of all God's Mercies to us, and that we should be exhorted to a worthy Improvement of them.

I shall therefore in the Prosecution of this Scripture, insist,

First, On the peculiar Favours which God shew'd to our Forefathers, or what he has done in the Days of Old for this Nation.

Secondly, What Blessings he has shew'd to us of the present Generation. And,

Then, *Thirdly*, Shall represent to you God's Intention and Purpose, in the Administration of all these Benefits, and consider what

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is necessary on our Part to engage the Divine Providence for the Security of the great Happiness we yet enjoy, by the *good Hand of our God upon us.*

First, Of the peculiar Favours God shew'd to our Fore-fathers, and what he has done in former Days to this Nation. And let these few Remarks suffice upon this Head, chiefly, between the time of our happy *Reformation from Popery*, to the memorable Deliverance we had again from the imminent Dangers of it at the *Revolution*.

After this Nation had receiv'd the glad Tidings of the Gospel of our blessed Saviour (which it did in or about the Apostles Time) it pleas'd God to suffer it afterwards to fall into very great Corruptions of that Holy Religion, which at first came from the God of Truth, in its native Purity and Simplicity. This came to pass by our falling in with the usurp'd Power of the See of *Rome* over other Churches; which thereby brought her Innovations upon Christianity among us; and we for several Ages made Profession of her gross Errors. By this means, we not only were brought under a great Obscurity of Religion, but were very much hamper'd in our Civil Rights. Indeed, some of our Princes did justly resent the Usurpations of *Rome* upon their Crown and Dignity; and sometimes the Lords and Commons of *England* complain'd of its Encroachments on their just Rights; but in spiritual Matters we were no less blind than other Nations, and bore our Yoke with a tame Submission to those who had no manner of Authority to impose it on us:

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But

But it pleas'd God, in his due Time to deliver us from that spiritual Bondage. The Time came, when we made a difference between the Doctrines of Christ, and those of *Rome*; when we retain'd those Principles which the Gospel teaches, and rejected those which came from the *Papacy*.

This is what we call the *Reformation*, a Providence never to be too much ador'd; and a Mercy never, surely, to be forgotten by us.

This Change, then happily wrought among us, doth not import our making a new Religion (as our Enemies would have it believ'd) but only, our casting off those Corruptions which by Degrees, like the *Enemies sowing Tares among the Wheat*, Matt. 13. grew up to the Disgrace and Scandal of Christianity.

We then retain'd only that Faith, and that Worship, which was taught and practis'd in this Kingdom, before the Church of *Rome* was, perhaps, ever so much as nam'd in this Island.

But before we came to a thorough Settlement of this blessed Change, God was pleas'd to exercise us with various Providences. Our Forefathers Hopes met with an early Disappointment by the Death of a young Prince, who had ardently espous'd the Interest of the *Reformation*. After this, the Cataracts of Blood were open'd upon us; when many of all Distinctions chose to die, rather than save their Life by renouncing of the Faith. Men suffer'd then for Religion, not for Rebellion; and were Martyrs for the sake of Christ, not for a blind Superstitious Fondness of the *Papal Dominion*. But

But blessed be God, this Persecution did not rage very long. The Accession of Queen *Elizabeth*, who had been wonderfully preserv'd from the Jaws of Death, open'd again a comfortable Prospect to this Nation. Her long Reign, and her settled Aversion to the *Romish* Tenets and Interest, brought our Holy Religion to a legal Establishment, which, tho' it has since that time been oft sorely shaken, yet could not hitherto be totally destroy'd.

During her Government, there were many Enterprizes to pull down what she had set up.

All the Arts, and all the Power of the *Papists* both at Home and Abroad, are well known to have been employ'd to that Purpose. Nor did their blind Zeal and Malice assuage, after she was gone to her Grave. Her Successor's Reign was perplex'd, and our Holy Religion many ways attack'd from the same Quarter. They went on still, sometimes with flattering Insinuations, and sometimes with inhumane Plots, as they had done before, to compass their Designs. But God as constantly disappointed them.

After that Reign (or rather for some Years towards the close of it) when they found by Experience, that they could not effect our Ruin by their own immediate Art and Strength, they resolv'd to make us (if possible) to be the Instruments of it.

To this end, they contriv'd how to embroil these Nations in a Civil War, which they unhappily compass'd. What by having too much access to the Court, and influencing our Coun-

cils, and what by falling in with popular Complaints, and Outcries among the Subjects, they gain'd the fairest Opportunity they could desire, to erect that *Babel* which we before had pull'd down. The *Papists* (says a noble Historian, speaking of those unhappy Times, and the Causes of them) were bold, and active. There was not any part acted on either side, which tended to the Destruction of the publick Peace, and hazarding the Security of our Religion and Liberties, but what they either openly abetted, or secretly encourag'd.

In that accomplish'd Act of Treason and Perjury, I mean the taking away the King's Life, the Ring-leaders of the *Popish* Faction shew'd their high Approbation of it: Well knowing, that such a Fact would bring the greatest blemish on that Religion which they mortally hated; and in all probability, open some Door or other, for their successful entring in upon us.

After this tragical Scene was over, these Men shelter'd themselves under their Disguises, as they had done before, to stir up all the Ill-humour that were to be found in the Nation, and with such giddy Heads as could not tell where to rest, brought us into most wretched Distractions both in Church and State.

But here again, the Divine Goodness interpos'd, and by a kind Providence restor'd our Church and Religion, together with our Crown and Liberties to their ancient Claim and Dignity; and so put us once more into a State of Tranquillity.

But

But after this, our restless Enemies envied our Happiness; and ceased not to drive on their Design of subjugating us one Day, to their arbitrary Measures both in Religion and Polity. Visible indeed were their Contrivances after the Restoration. They early obtain'd this step to gain their Point, *viz.* in preventing that Prince who then came to the Throne, having any legal Issue. I say a likely step that was, because thereby a way was pav'd, for a Successor, whose Affection for their Interest was never disputed. In those Days the unhappy Differences about some Things in Religion among *Protestants*, were aggravated to such a Degree as I am not willing to mention; which could have no other Tendency, and we are sure, our common Enemies could have no other Purpose, than to weaken us, and to embitter our Spirits against one another, that so they might have a more favourable Opportunity of deciding our Quarrels in favour of themselves. They enter'd also into Measures to take away that Prince's Life; and according to their usual Custom, when their Wickedness was discover'd, endeavour'd to remove the Design from themselves to other Men. There were some Persons in that Time, who durst speak for our Religion and Laws, and justly dreaded the intended Subversion of them, as soon as it was possible to do it, after that Prince's Decease; and this Zeal for their Country, drew the Indignation of those Men upon them to the uttermost.

The Fears of what was like to come, whenever it should please God to remove the King then reigning (and how he was remov'd, perhaps the *Papists* know best) grew into Facts soon after his Death.

Our Leige Sovereign (or our King according to Law, because he undertook to govern us by the Law of the Land) soon declar'd himself of that Religion, which then stood condemn'd by Law; and in a little Time made it evident, that he resolv'd to subvert that Constitution which secur'd our Religion, and kept out *Popery*.

It would be too tedious to give you a particular Account, what open Assaults were made upon our Religion, Laws, and Liberties; and what terrible Apprehensions all sincere *Protestants* had, of what was too likely to fall upon this Nation.

An arbitrary Power was then exercis'd over us.

It was made criminal for the Fathers of our Church dutifully and modestly to say, why they could not do Things against their Conscience. The Clergy of our Church were forbid to defend their Religion in the Pulpit, when it was every where attack'd by the *Romish* Priests. This was evident from the King's Letter to the *Protestant* Bishops, directing them to discharge the inferiour Clergy from preaching on controverted Points; which was equal to a Prohibition to preach against *Popery*. Our Colleges and Corporations were violently invaded. *Protest Papists* were put into Places all over the Kingdom; tho'

tho' no part of our Constitution was better secur'd, than that by which they were incapable of any Trust in the Government. An Army was set up, not to protect and defend us in our legal Rights, which would have endear'd them to us; but to compleat our Destruction, and enable the *Papists* to have their Will upon us. The Truth is, there appear'd to humane Sight, this Choice only, *viz.* Whether we would turn *Papists*, or stand to their Mercy in adhering to our Religion. If any Body shou'd think this too hard a Character of our State at that Time, I would only desire to be inform'd, when it was, where *Popery* had the Ascendant, that Men had any other Option besides this, *viz.* either to be of that Religion, or suffer for the denying of it.

But even here, did our good God step in to our Relief, and strangely delivered us at the very brink of Ruin. And here I shall begin the Second Head of my Discourse, *viz.* to shew,

What Signal Mercies God has shew'd of late to us of this present Generation.

By the Happy *Revolution*, we were deliver'd from those direful Thoughts, which just before fill'd our Hearts. When we did not know where to cast our Eyes for help, against that Flood of Misery, which was coming with a full Tide upon us, both from our Home-bred and Foreign Enemies, God who has the Reins of this World in his Hand, turn'd away our impending Misery; and gave us hope of being still preserv'd.

But our Deliverance then, was too great to be obtain'd all at once. It was fit we should be recover'd

cover'd by flow Steps; especially when many of us had had too visible a Hand in bringing the publick Malady upon us: And our Enemies were too formidable, to drop their Designs at the first Disappointment. This it was which brought us into the absolute Necessity of a War: In which the Success for many Years was various; and the final Issue uncertain. We must indeed, confess to the Praise of Almighty God, that the Prospect of our future Security, rather brightned, than clouded upon us.

The glorious Prince who then sway'd the Sceptre, left no Stone unturn'd to perfect our Deliverance.

He exhausted his own Treasure, he ventur'd himself in a Thousand Dangers, and (what was a greater Trouble to his noble Soul) he struggled with an ungrateful, and uneasie Generation of Men in this Kingdom; who from Time to Time, embarass'd our Affairs, and gave too much Heart to our open Enemies. Nor must we forget, how God did wonderfully preserve that Prince's Life; not only in many hazardous Seiges, and pitch'd Battels; where he fought in the Face of Death oft-times, as the meanest Soldier did; but from secret Conspiracies, and wicked Plots, to cut him off in cool Blood. When his Enemies could not reach his precious Life in the Field, they contriv'd Assassinations both here and in *Flanders*, to dispatch him out of the World.

In his Reign, there were several good Laws made, which provided more effectually against the Mischiefs which before threatned us. Especially;

cially, care was taken for a Succession of Princes, who should be the Defenders of our Faith and Civil Rights.

This was a Law of the highest importance to the Welfare of this Church and Nation; and lay very near the Heart of that King, of Immortal Memory.

So great, so good a Friend was he to us, that he did his best, not only to make us Happy in his own Days, but to perpetuate the greatest Blessings to us to all Posterity. So that we owe the Happiness of having his present Majesty to rule over us, to the Providence of King *William*, who next to God, procured the Settlement of the Crown on him, and his illustrious House in the Protestant Line.

I say in the Protestant Line; for such was the Prudence of that Monarch, and the Wisdom of the Nation at that Time, that the Profession of the Popish Religion, was made a Bar to all legal Pretences to the Crown of these Realms: And should any after Possession own that Religion, it should be a Forfeiture of that Dignity, and free the Subjects from their Allegiance. And because Princes marrying with Papists, had been more than once of dangerous Consequence to this Nation; our Laws then likewise provided against all future Perils on that Account.

When it pleased God to take that Prince to himself, the Crown devolv'd of Course to the late Queen, of pious Memory. She, while she trod in the Steps of her Predecessor, was the Wonder of the World. How great was her Name? How conquering were her Armies?

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How

How glorious a Figure did this Nation make? Had she pursued those Measures but a little longer (for just was she come to the end of the Scheme) her Reign had out-shone all the Monarchs that went before her; and no Prince would have made a greater Figure in History for the compass of those Years she held the Scepter.

But there is nothing perfect in this World; and what declension there was in the latter part of that Reign, we will ascribe more to the false Suggestions, and wicked Insinuations of others, than to any ill Design which could possess her Royal Breast.

And, good God! Whither were those Men carrying us, who then got the Ascendant? How did they undo in a little Time, all that was done for the Preservation of our Religion and Civil Rights, in the Course of several Years, at great Expence, and with much Wisdom?

In what a vile manner were the noble Patriots of our Country treated? How was the Interest of the Protestant Succession weakned? How barefac'd were the Attempts upon it? Those Principles which bore a direct Contradiction to it were in Vogue.

The next Heir, the Line of Blood, Indefeasible Right, Non-Resistance, as oppos'd to the Resistance made at the Revolution, and which has been declar'd consistent with our Constitution, were the Subject of too many Addresses, Sermons, and Books.

Those Men who were zealous for his present Majesty's Title, were represented as the worst of Men, Enemies to the Church, and disaffected to the Queen.

How

How openly was the Pretender's Health drank by some, and by many others with such Innuendo's as had an evident meaning? And (which is horrid to mention) there were too many who publickly abjur'd him, only that they might do him the better Service. This last Charge is very fully prov'd by the Rebellion; in which there were many actually engag'd, who had given the most sacred Assurances that Men could give to the contrary.

Nay, to such a Pass were Things come in the Time I am speaking of, that many Thousands were lifted into the Pretender's Service in *Ireland*; and from the Impunity such Practices met with there, the same begun to be carried on in our own Nation. What Encouragement those Proceedings had from particular Persons then in Power in both Kingdoms, and how far their Intentions were for the Extirpation of the Protestant Succession, which we have now happily begun to enjoy, I shall not presume to determine. This must be left to those whose Province it is to inspect the Management of the Publick Affairs; only, I desire leave to observe thus much, that the Treatment which some met with, who then represented the Prince, who is now our Gracious King; the Steps taken to break off all good Understanding with our best Allies, and the leaving some of them to the Fury of an enrag'd Enemy; the not resenting the shameful Infraction of some Articles of our Stipulation with *France*, which was plainly favourable to an ill Design; the leaving the Guarantee of our Succession precarious; our fondness of a strict Amity with the very *Fau-*

tor of the Pretender, must afford Speculations to every Person that values the Honour and Interest of his Country; and cannot but oblige him, at least to wonder, what any Man could mean who was any way concern'd in the Administration; who that truly lov'd his Nation and Religion could forbear to say, *O my Soul come not thou into their Secret, unto their Assembly mine Honour be not thou united!*

But whatever the secret Designs of some were, we need no Key to open their meaning, who stuck not to talk, write, and act in defiance of that Law which had placed the Crown on the Head of his present Majesty, when it should please God to remove it from her's who then wore it.

And had that wicked Design, of disappointing his peaceable Accession, succeeded, what a miserable Condition had this poor Nation been then in? Our King would not have tamely dropt his Title: His Friends (and therefore the Friends to our Religion and Country) would not have easily forsaken him, and their own Security. This must have involv'd the Nation in Blood, our Swords must have been sheathed in one another's Bowels, immediately upon the demise of the Queen.

What was prophesied against *Jerusalem*, would have been verified upon us also; *There would have been great Tribulation, such as had not been from the beginning to that time*, Mat. 24. 21. And had our Enemies prevail'd, what further Miseries had then ensued? what Ruin had been entail'd upon us? no longer could we have expected the Security of our Church and Religion, no longer could we have been a free People; *France* would have

have drawn an insolvent Bill upon us, and we must have been chain'd down to perpetual Slavery and Idolatry, for our Ingratitude both to God and Man.

But here we found, that God *prevented us with the Blessings of his Goodness*, and did not leave us to that deluge of Miseries, which the accomplishment of our Enemies Projects would have involved us in. Our late *Queen* was taken to God's Mercy, before her Enemies, as well as the Nations, were ready for such a Change; for we may say in the Language of the Prophet, that she was one of those who *are taken away from the Evil to come*, Isa. 57. 1. By this the Hopes of our Enemies were dashed in Pieces, and their Advances made against us were unexpectedly stop'd.

And here we may well stand, and view the great Goodness of God in setting our King on the Throne of his Ancestors in Peace, by which, never Nation had a fairer Prospect of all desirable Blessings than we had. All Perswasions of Men among us might have been Happy if they had pleas'd. God gave us a wise, sober, valiant, and rich Monarch; a Prince of the greatest Integrity; a known Father to his Subjects in the Country from whence he came; a Lover of the Reform'd Religion, and an Asserter of the Common Liberty of Mankind: What was there we had not reason to look for from such a Prince? would all Men but have disposed themselves for the benign Influences of his Government.

But alas! such was the inveterate, and settled Enmity of some Men to his Succession, and our Nations Interest, that they quickly reviv'd their
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former Designs, and resolv'd to deprive him of the Crown and Dignity he was possess'd of, both by Law, and his own great Merits; and to strip us of that Assurance we had, of being *safe under his Shadow*. This produc'd that unnatural and wicked Rebellion which has been of late among us; the most groundless, of the most fatal Consequence, had it prosper'd, and attended with the most solemn and deliberate Perjury, that perhaps ever any Rebellion before it was.

This Conspiracy was, questionless, begun with hopes of foreign Assistance; and a very formidable one, no doubt, had been given to it, had not Divine Providence interpos'd. A neighbouring Prince who then reign'd, and was ever ready to help forward the Ruin of our Religion and Country, was taken into another World, by which the wicked Cause here received a sharp Rebuke; and would have put an end to such a Contrivance, had it not been manag'd by Men of desperate Resolutions, and encourag'd by others under strong Delusions; or had it not been so far carried on, that the Conspirators could not go back without being discover'd, and thereby brought to Justice.

From some, or all of these Causes, a bold Attack was made on the Peace, the Religion and Liberties of this Kingdom, and the utter Dissolution of that happy Settlement of the Crown on our King and his Family, by which those invaluable Mercies are now likely to be continued to us. If any Body can be so credulous, as to expect our Religion and Civil Rights would have been safe under such a Change, we cannot help it.

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Those People seem prepar'd to believe Transubstantiation it self, and to receive any Impressions, tho' never so unreasonable; but I hope it will be the last Thing we shall ever do, to trust those dearest Blessings we enjoy on such precarious Terms, as too many who call themselves Protestants, and would be thought great Friends to our Church, are ready to do.

This Rebellion could have had little that had been deserving the least fear, at its first Appearance, had it not been for People of this Temper. How little solicitous for our Country's Peace were many who call themselves Protestants? how sullen were a considerable Number of all Ranks, while our Enemies were in open Arms? But 'twas happy for us that we needed not their help. The Intrepidity and Vigilance of our Sovereign; the Wisdom and Resolution of the great Council of the Nation; the Loyalty and Bravery of our Troops, and the hearty Affection of many other Persons, have, by the Blessing of God, crush'd this horrid Enterprize, and brought those that were engag'd in it, some to deserv'd Justice, some to flight, and those that remain, to retire to such Parts of this Island, where, together with their Guilt and Ignominy, it is Punishment enough for any Crime (less than this Rebellion) to be confin'd.

O the stupendious Mercy of our God! who has thus again and again in a very little time reviv'd and comforted us. I may well take up the Psalmist's Words, 106. 2. *How can we express the noble Acts of the Lord, and shew forth all his Praise?* Our Hopes are now greater, our publick Tranquillity, and all the Blessings which attend a People, seem now
more

more secure than ever. There is nothing wanting to complete and perpetuate our Felicity, but the considering what great Things God has done for us, and to make a due Improvement of them.

What I have said, cannot I presume be charg'd as meddling with Things out of the Sphere of my own Function; I would not willingly do that; but should any think so, I may very justly answer for my self, that besides the present Occasion, which I suppose to be a sufficient Defence, I have *Moses*, *David*, and other inspired Writers, who have recited the various Providences of God to his Church of old; and their Examples are worthy our Imitation. Give me leave now, to represent to you God's Design in all his Goodness towards us, and what is necessary to engage the Divine Providence to be still propitious to us: And of this I shall speak very briefly.

It is obvious to every considerate Person, that such a train of Blessings as we of this Church and Kingdom have receiv'd from God, should create a lasting remembrance of them in all our Hearts. When *Moses* had told the *Israelites* that there was *no Nation that had God so nigh, as the Lord their God was to them*, he exhorts them to *take heed that they did not forget the Things which their Eyes had seen, and lest they should depart out of their Heart*.

The least of God's private Mercies should make a thankful Impression upon us; and surely then, the publick and repeated Instances of his providential Care should leave indelible Characters of his Goodness upon our Hearts. This is so reasonable, and necessary a Consequent of God's distinguishing Love to any People, that they can
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have no pretence to his future Protection, who do not mind it. And from hence, how may we *take up a wailing* on the Account of the Ingratitude of too many in this Nation, who spurn at the greatest Favours of Heaven; and reject the choicest Blessings, as a Curse and Vexation to them?

But this I now hope is not a National Sin; else, we may expect God should say, *Shall I not visit for these Things, and shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?* And as we should pay our Thanks immediately to Almighty God, so we should acknowledge, and honour the Instruments by which he has conveyed his Blessings to us.

In all the successive Instances of our Preservation and Deliverance, God has made use of proper Instruments. He has not used immediate Miracles to save and establish us; but has wrought for us by such Means, as have been very surprising; and in which there has appear'd his peculiar Foresight, and watchful Providence.

How remarkable were the Means that saved us at the Revolution? How Happy was it that there was a *Protestant* Family reserv'd, for the Crown of these Realms, and that the Royal Branches of it are so many?

How much do we owe to that Prince, and that Parliament, which settled the Succession upon it? And how are we bound to Honour, and Obey the King, whom God has now set over us, as a Sun, a Shield to this Nation; He defends us from all Wrong, He protects us in all our Rights. His faithful Subjects shall have the Protection of

the Law, and his Enemies only shall feel the Justice of it. Notwithstanding the Clamors of some Men, it may be truly said of him, *Whose Ox has he taken? Whose Ass has he taken? Whom has he defrauded? Or whom has he oppress'd?*

Our Church is safe; our Constitution is secure; *And every Man may sit under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-tree, and have no need to be afraid, if he will but study to be Quiet, and do his own Business.* And here it is observable, how groundless the out-cry of Cruelty at this Day is, when only one in a Hundred, perhaps, is executed for the shedding of much innocent Blood; for attempting to Dethrone his Majesty; and bring this Kingdom into the utmost Desolation? Never had Men fairer Trials; nor could any Body desire more Mercy, unless they would have the present Government never to use any Justice. I dare say, there are none but such, as either are taken in the Fact of Treason, or fear they may be found Abettors of it, who will censure his Majesty, or his Administration on this Account.

But I hope these groundless Calumnies, with many other disloyal Reflections, will, instead of alienating our Affections from our excellent Prince, have a contrary Effect, to what our Enemies intend; and be a means to unite us in a more close Union with him; and thereby, to the mutual Interest of Himself, and People.

We cannot more effectually answer the End of all God's Mercies to us, than by promoting the publick Quiet, and the Interest of the Nation. *A Kingdom divided against it self, our Saviour says, cannot stand, Mark 3. 24.* We should there-

therefore fence against Divisions as the most fatal Evil; and as we value our Holy Religion, our good Laws, and the Blessing of our King, and his Family's reigning over us, should strive to be *of one Heart, and of one Mind.*

Let there be no other Distinctions heard of among us, but those who are for remembering God's great Mercies to this Nation, and those who cast them behind their Backs: Such as are for our happy Constitution, and his Majesty King GEORGE the Defender of it; and those, who are for an arbitrary Government, and setting a *Popish Pretender* at the Head of it.

And should not that Holy Religion God has in so wonderful a Manner preserv'd, be dearer to us than all the World? How should we *hold fast the Profession of it without wavering*? And how ought it to influence our Hearts, and direct our Lives? We profess a reform'd Religion; and nothing can excuse us before God, and to our own Consciences, if our Hearts are not purify'd, nor our Conversations better'd by it. O then! let that undefiled Faith, which is derived from God, our Saviour; which was planted by Men of Primitive Spirits, and water'd with the Blood of Martyrs; which has been often assaulted by Men of corrupt Minds, but as oft rescued by the Power and Providence of God: Let this Holy Faith, I say, Live, and Triumph in us, over all Infidelity, and Prophaneness, to the Honour of its Divine Author, its own Reputation, and Security in this Kingdom, and to every Man's present and eternal Comfort.

And

And let me humbly advise, that those good Laws by which we are yet a free People, may always have that due Regard, which they deserve from us. Let them be used to defend the Innocent, and chastise the Guilty; to protect peaceable Men, and to suppress those restless Spirits, which would bring Confusion upon us.

To conclude,

Let all Orders and Degrees of Men in their private and publick Capacities, consider how to comport with God's great Mercies vouchsaf'd to this Nation. As God has abundantly testified his being our God, so let us shew by our Behaviour, that we desire to be his People. We have all the ties upon us, People can have, to serve God. As his Mercies have been very distinguishing towards us, we should make our Obedience to bear a due Proportion to the Divine Favours.

If we would but set our selves to serve him in Sincerity and Truth, we may still depend upon it, that *the Lord of Hosts will be with us, and the God of Jacob will be our Refuge. And if God be for us, we need not fear, who shall ever be against us.*

I will end with the Prophet's Words in the Close of this Chapter; *Fear the Lord, and serve him, in Truth, with all your Hearts; for consider, how great Things he hath done for us.*

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